

TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Maria P. Donatucci
DATE: September 30, 2011
SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship – Community Alerts for Oil Refinery Emergencies

In the future, I intend to introduce legislation that will amend the Oil and Gas Act requiring oil refineries to inform the public of any threats or emergencies arising from the practice of oil refining. They will provide alerts through emergency notification systems used by governments, emergency management agencies and first responders.

The practice of refining crude oil is a complex process, one with potential dangers that can lead to serious health risks. This past April, I hosted a Policy Committee hearing on air quality and public safety issues with oil refineries, where testifiers from oil refineries informed the committee of the “Ready Notify PA” system. This is an electronic community alert system run by the Office of Emergency Management that helps officials in the Philadelphia area send emergency text alerts and other important notifications to residents who live near oil refineries. Alerts can be sent to a cell phone, pager, BlackBerry, PDA and/or E-mail account. Those who live near oil refineries can opt in to this system so they are provided with up to date and almost immediate notifications about tests, drills and or emergencies at oil refineries.

The use of these systems can be used across the Commonwealth in a number of ways. From severe weather alerts to possible terrorist attacks, these community alert systems can keep our constituents apprised of the most vital and potentially life threatening events as soon as they arise.

This legislation will benefit all Pennsylvanians and I urge you to join me in co-sponsoring this important piece of legislation. If you are interested, please contact Marilyn Antes by phone at 783-8634 or by e-mail at mantes@pahouse.net.